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Sep 5th 2018

Via ECFS
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

I chose to go with my ISP (Sonic.net) due to the fact that they offer superior service to the big competitors (such as AT&T and Comcast) at a price I can afford, especially as we're on a fixed income and every cent we have has to be carefully accounted for.

Having had service from the big companies before (such as AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon) in various places I've lived, we often found ourselves subjected to prices going up higher and higher with no sense of accountability on the part of the big companies and being put into a situation where we not only had difficulty in sometimes affording even basic service, but even after canceling service and paying our final bill, some of the big companies would even mysteriously send something to collections to further harass us despite our having proof of having paid our final bill in full (the matter was eventually resolved, but took more telephone calls than I care to remember before it happened. It almost came to having to contact a local news station all because we chose to leave for another service. This same practice has been experienced by others we've known who have used some of those same companies as well when they chose to leave for a different provider).

With the big companies, we were also often treated to either tech support who were reading off a script or treated us like we were unimportant and didn't appear to know anything outside what was posted on the screen nor seemed to care if our service or issues were resolved or not. They also often liked to sneak in hidden charges to us or complain if we were working with a different operating system, despite no disclaimers or notice about that going in.

With Sonic, I've received nothing but wonderful customer service from them from staff who clearly know what they're talking about and seem caring to say nothing of checking in with customers after-the-fact with an issue to ensure everything is satisfactory and working as it should or an issue has been completely resolved. I feel like I'm not just a number or phone call, but an actual person. Just as they provide space for customers to help one-another out (which their staff also sometimes participate in), which makes it feel more like a community. They also offer a number of amenities and services that the big companies either refuse, can't, or charge a limb for. Just as they never have snuck in any price hikes without warning to customers and always make us aware of what's going on with them--which is far more than can be said for the big companies out there I've had to deal

with in the past.

I also very much appreciate their handling of international calls and rates, especially as someone who has family and family friends who reside in other countries whom we call on a regular basis (especially as many are without internet service, themselves). Had we gone with a bigger company, we would have had to wait many months to years to hear anything from them as we would have had to rely upon the mail system (and hope it arrived to them--in some cases, we have literally had it happen where even letters never arrived due to issues with the postal system in those other countries) or had to wait for someone to possibly travel to those countries to hand deliver a letter from us and vice versa. The rates charged by the bigger companies by comparison would be too high for us to be able to make those calls.

I rely upon them not just for personal use, but also for my courses in school. I have served as a caretaker to an elderly relative who needs someone 24/7 and therefore being able to physically go take classes has not been an option, nor can I afford the cost of transportation to the campus. Instead, I have had to take classes online as I work toward my degree and therefore my internet service is crucial to my life and future. Also, as some classes involve watching videos, dial-up is really not an option (assuming one could even find it) given the size and speeds those videos require or in having to upload projects that can sometimes be massive in terms of their filesize.

Just as whenever we've seen it happen in any industry where there are few options outside big companies, what's often happened is that we the consumers get screwed in every way from financially to worse service to what we're actually getting for our hard-earned money (which is often far less). We need to maintain more competition, especially in this market and in this day and age, where people depend upon phone and internet usage for everything. By taking away the option to stay with the smaller companies or presenting a situation that makes it impossible for them to exist, it's really hurting those who can afford it the least.

Overall, I've had nothing but a wonderful experience in my use of Sonic.Net. They're a clear case of where size doesn't matter as they provide us with more personalized service and options than their larger competitors (big telephony/ISPs) and at a more reasonable price than one sees with the big companies. I would ask that Sonic.Net and other companies like them are able to continue to exist and that the conditions that make it possible for them to exist and conduct business remain intact versus giving in to big companies such as AT&T. The last thing we need is another oligarchy or monopoly!

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